

(Washington DC) Today, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez sent a letter to Department of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff regarding the funding levels announced last week for the Urban Area Security Initiative program. San Antonio's share of this funding has dropped for the last three years in a row despite being home to four military facilities, crucial intelligence gathering operations and a key inland port of entry. In particular, Congressman Gonzalez would like the Department of Homeland Security to explain how San Antonio, America's 8th largest city, (\$4.6 million) received less funding than Charlotte, North Carolina (\$9 million up from \$5.5 million the year before.)

"I understand that national security requires that the Department of Homeland Security shield its method of calculating funding for cities," said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez, "but it is baffling that San Antonio that should see decreasing funding when our community has vital military and intelligence facilities. We need adequate funding to make our city safe against the threat of attacks, and I fear that the city is not getting the money it needs to accomplish this task. I would like the opportunity to discuss these concerns with Secretary Chertoff and look forward to meeting with him."

The text of the letter follows:

June 6, 2006

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

I write to request a meeting with you to discuss the fiscal year 2006 Homeland Grant Program Allocation to the city of San Antonio, Texas. I am extremely disappointed with the funding level the city received during this grant cycle.

Since 2004, our city has lost \$1.7 million in funding to support homeland security efforts. In case you were not aware, the city of San Antonio is the 8th largest in the U.S., is one of the top tourist destinations in the country and is surrounded by four active military installations where some of our nation's top intelligence and medical research takes place. We are also slated to increase our population base very shortly with the influx of nearly 15,000 additional Department of Defense employees. In all, San Antonio has a lot of activity taking place within its borders that our local leaders are or soon will be responsible for protecting. To reduce the city's homeland security funding now is a devastating blow to these efforts.

I find it highly suspect that funding for San Antonio is being reduced in such a dramatic fashion. Locations such as Omaha, Nebraska with one-third the population of San Antonio are receiving close to double the funding we are. In the case of Louisville, Kentucky, they have only one-fifth the population and yet twice the funding. I raise these as examples only because it has been my understanding all along the grants were awarded based on several criteria, with population density being primary among these. If this is not the case, then I ask you to provide me with an explanation of what exactly are the criteria the Department of Homeland Security considers and how San Antonio fits into them.

Again, I reiterate my request for a meeting with you at the earliest possible date. I look forward to our discussion of this matter.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress

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